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SONIC

THE HEDGEHOG

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**DRAGON'S
LAIR**

DIRECT EDITION

SHINJI
TAKAHASHI
JDRM

HIGH ABOVE MOBIUS' SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE...

THERE IT IS, FREEDOM FIGHTERS...

...THE ENTRANCE TO THE HIDDEN CITY OF STATION SQUARE!

WHO'D EVER BELIEVE AN AIRPLANE CARRYING OVERLANDERS SMACKED INTO THIS MOUNTAIN CENTURIES BACK--

--AND THE SURVIVORS DISCOVERED A LOST CONTINENT BENEATH IT?

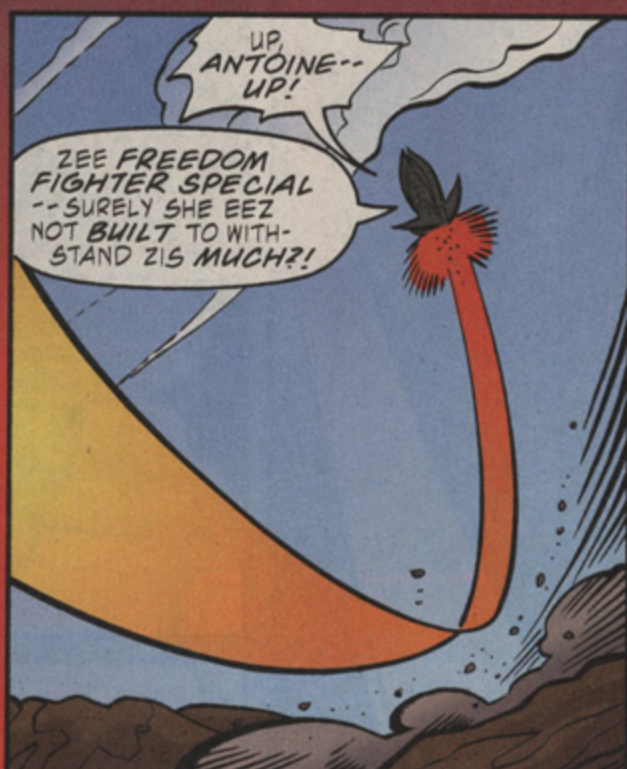
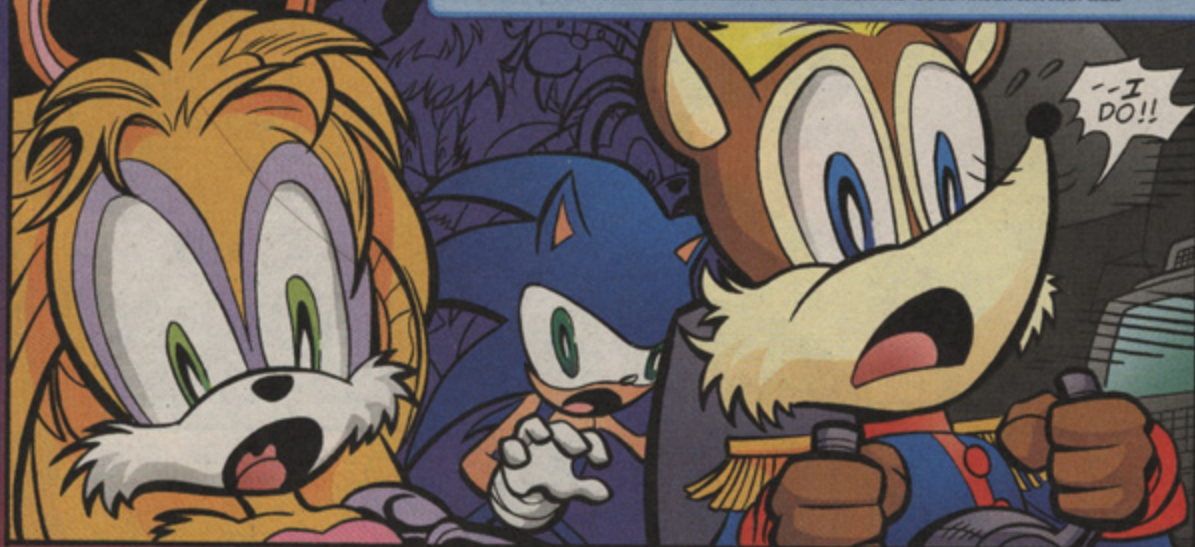
TO ANSWER ZAT QUESTION FAIRLY, MON AMI--

CROUCHING HEDGEHOG

龍藏猪豪人

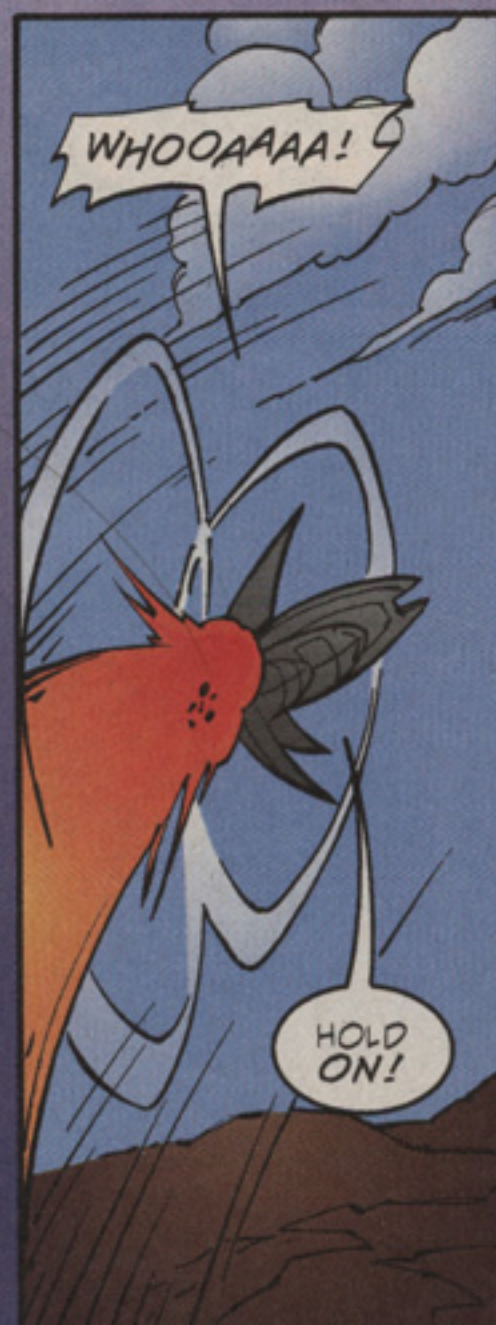
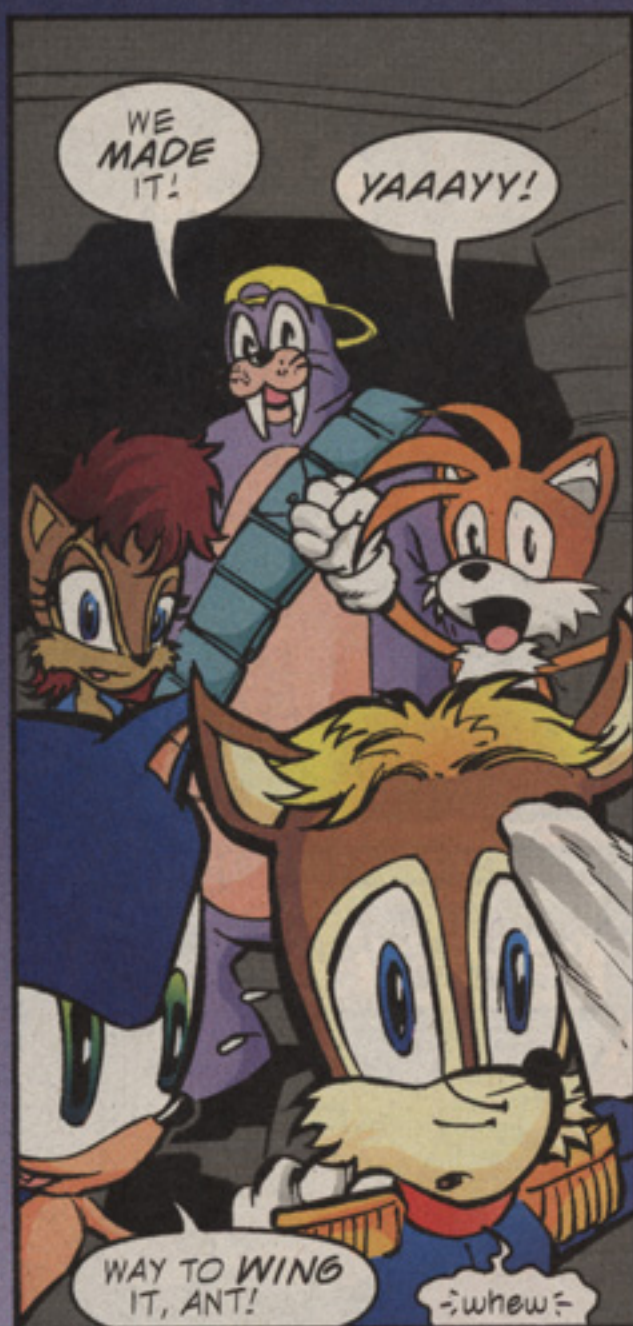
HIDDEN DRAGON

KARL BOLLERS WRITER RON LIM PENCILER PAM EKLUND & ANDREW PEPOY INKERS
JEFF POWELL LETTERER W/ ASSISTANTS BY JULIE LIU JOSH & AIMEE RAYCOLORISTS J.E. GABRIE EDITOR/ART DIRECTOR
VICTOR GORELICK MANAGING EDITOR RICHARD GOLDWATER EDITOR IN CHIEF



*AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

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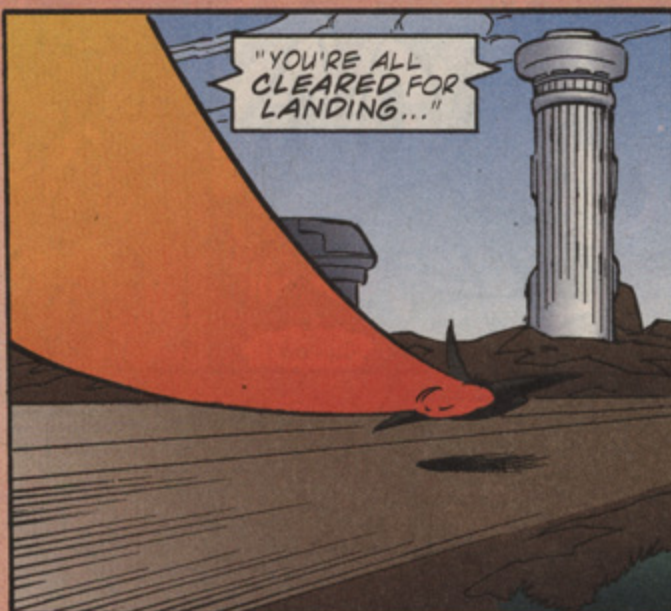
WHAT THE HECK
HAPPENED BACK
THERE?

I AM
'AVING
NOT ONE
CLUE!



FREEDOM FIGHTER
SPECIAL, THIS IS STATION
SQUARE AIR CONTROL.
OVER.

LOUDLY
AND
CLEARLY,
WE ARE
READING
YOU!

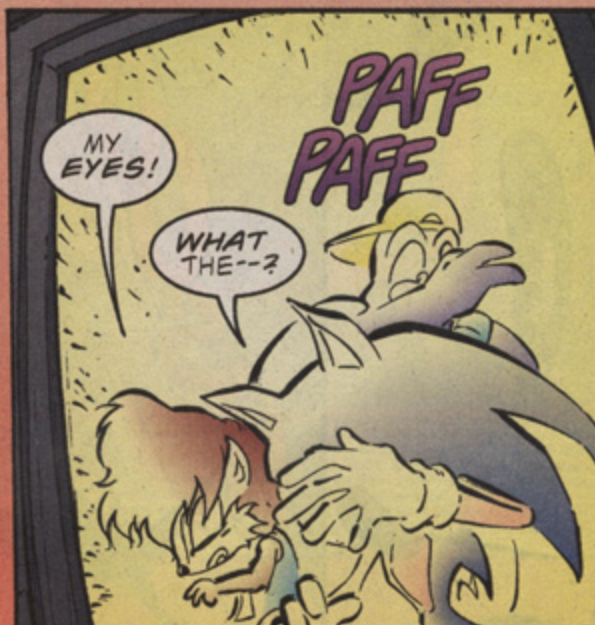


"YOU'RE ALL
CLEARED FOR
LANDING..."



NOW REMEMBER
GANG, THIS COULD BE
A STICKY DIPLOMATIC
SITUATION...

...SO BE READY
FOR ANYTHING!



MY
EYES!

WHAT
THE--?

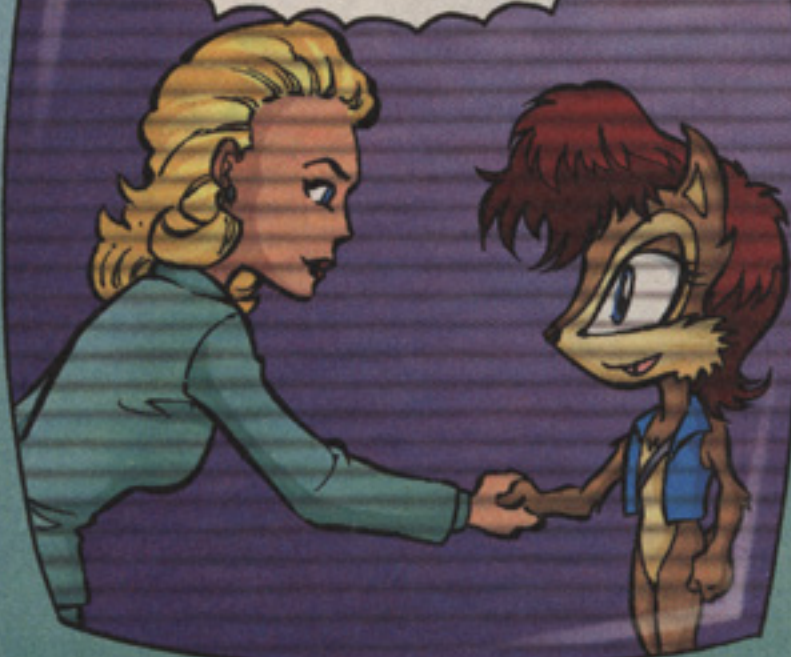
...IN OTHER NEWS,
THERE WAS MUCH FAN-
FARE TODAY...



...AS A GROUP OF
ANTHROPOMORPHIC DELEGATES
ARRIVED FROM THE
OVERSEAS KINGDOM
OF KNOTHOLE.



THOUGH IMMEDIATELY
ESCORTED AWAY BY THE
PRESIDENT'S
SECRETARY...



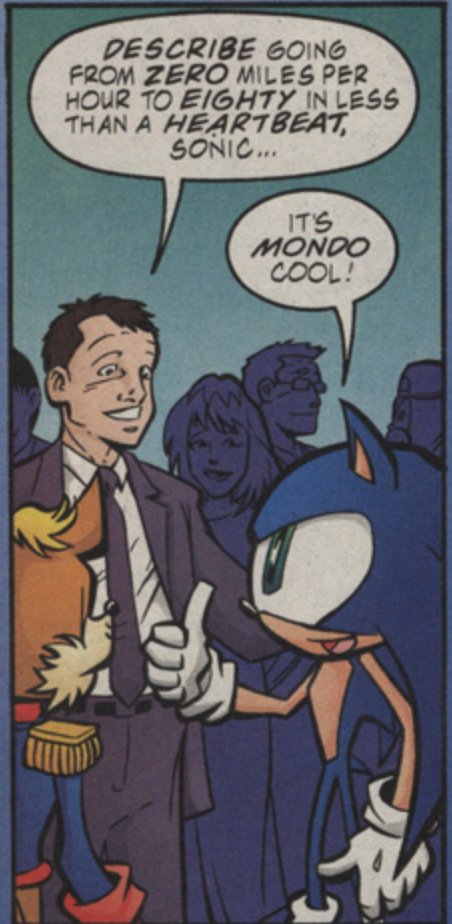
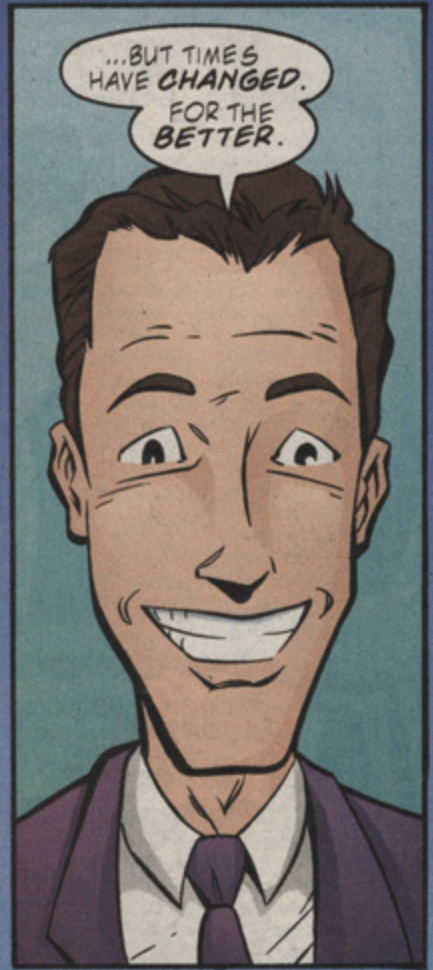
...WHEN ASKED HOW
IT FELT TO BE IN TOWN,
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
HAD THIS MUCH TO
SAY...

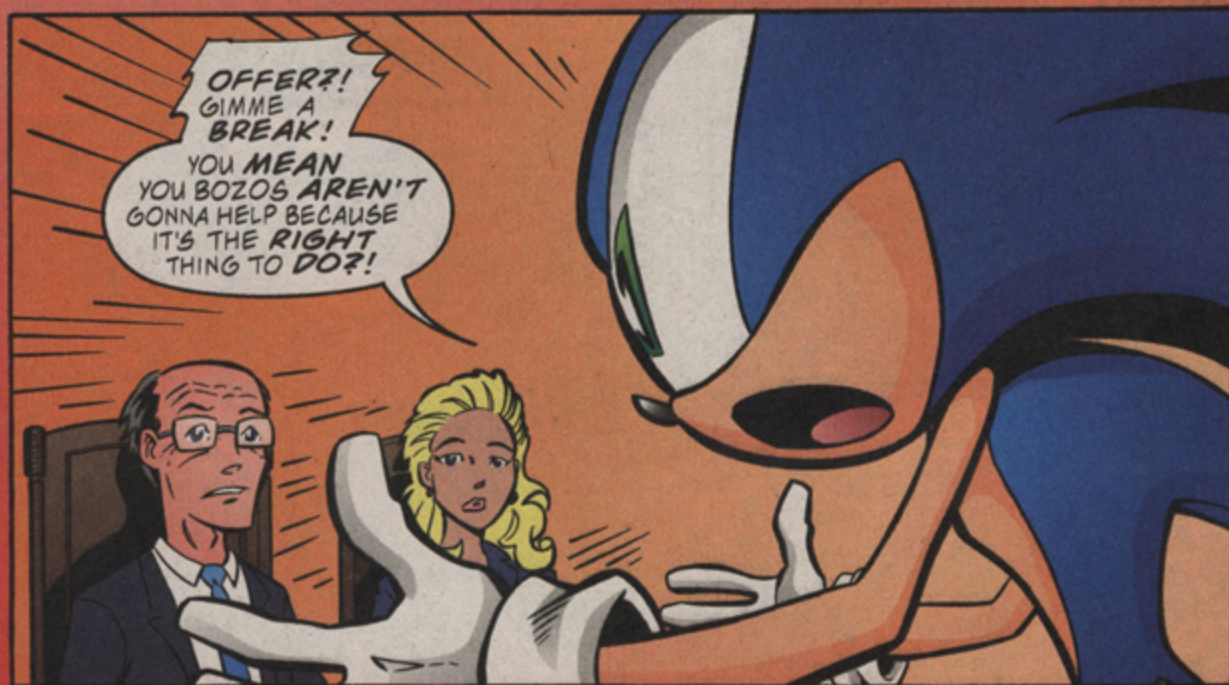
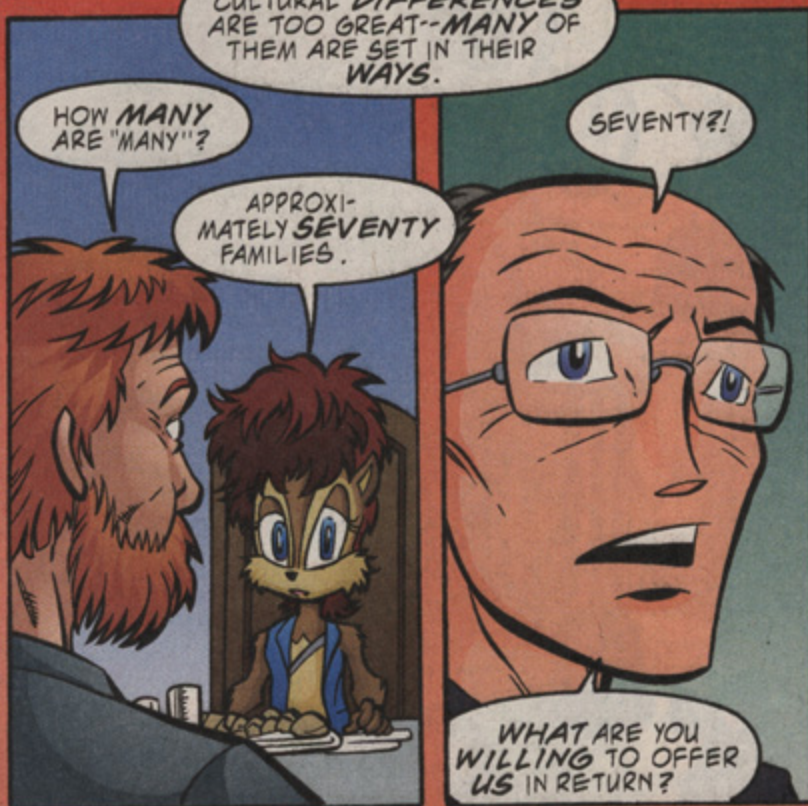
WAY
PAST COOL,
DUDE!



HA-HA!
WAY PAST COOL
INDEED!









SONIC?

SAL?

SIT.



MISTER
PRESIDENT...
LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN.



...YOU'RE
LOOKING AT
DOCTOR
ROBOTNIK...



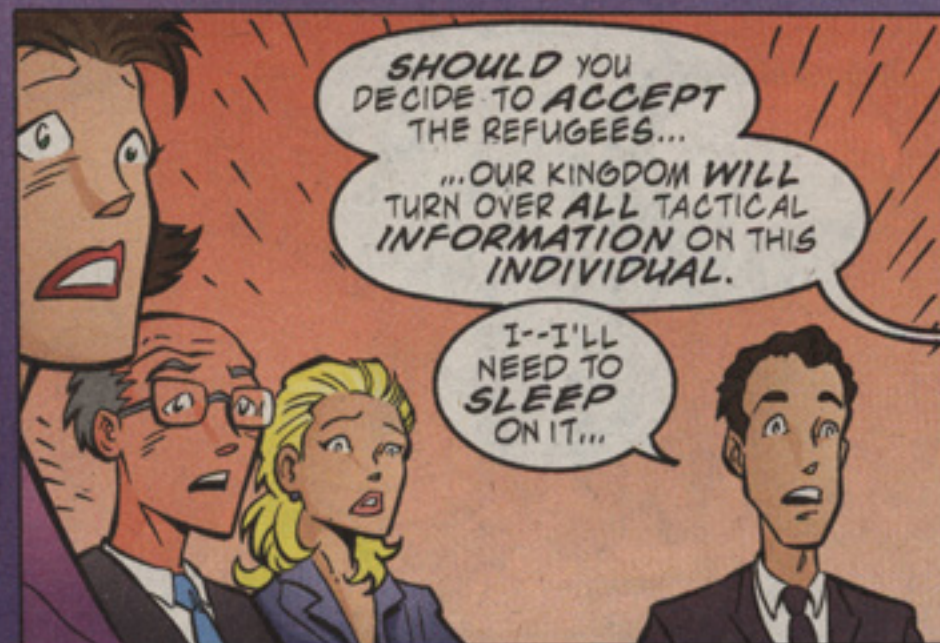
...THE EVIL GENIUS
WHO ONCE TRIED TO
CONQUER STATION SQUARE
USING THE ANCIENT WATER-
BEAST, CHAOS*...

*SEE SONIC ADVENTURE GAME ADAPTATION.



...AND LATER
RELEASED HIS
GRANDFATHER'S CREATION
SHADOW IN ORDER TO
SABOTAGE YOUR ENERGY
SUPPLY.*

*SEE THE SONIC ADVENTURE 2
ADAPTATION IN ISH.#98



SHOULD YOU
DECIDE TO ACCEPT
THE REFUGEES...

...OUR KINGDOM WILL
TURN OVER ALL TACTICAL
INFORMATION ON THIS
INDIVIDUAL.

I--I'LL
NEED TO
SLEEP
ON IT...

LATER...

I THOUGHT
THESE "HUMANS"
WERE SUPPOSED
TO BE OUR
ALLIES.

WHY DID I
THINK THEY'D HELP
US FOR FREE?

GUESS I
REALLY DIDN'T
KNOW WHAT
TO EXPECT.

I ONLY
KNEW MY
ORDERS...

SONIC, I WANT YOU
TO SERVE AS SALLY'S
BODYGUARD ON THIS
MISSION...

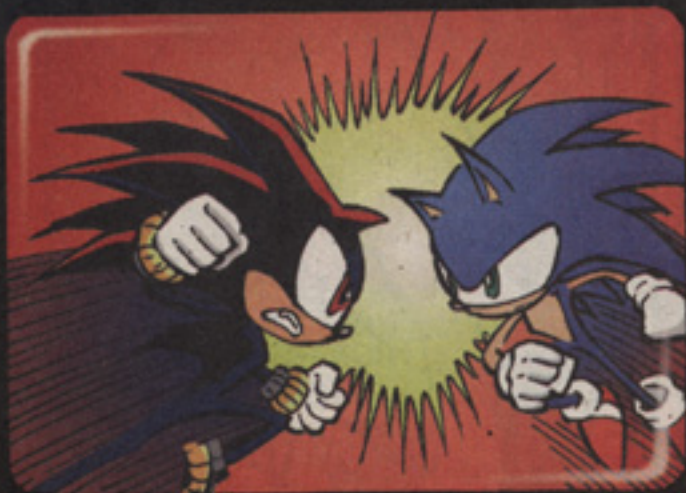
YES,
SIR!

HEY,
SONIC!

WE'RE GONNA
CHECK OUT THE VIDEO
ARCADE! WANT TO
COME WITH?

DOES
ST. JOHN
STINK?

THE NEXT DAY...



HE'S GOT AN
ATTITUDE, BUT
THIS SONIC...

...**COULD**
BE A VALUABLE
AGENT. HE'S
CERTAINLY GOT
ALL THE RIGHT
MOVES.

THAT HE
DOES, SIR...
THAT HE
DOES.



REWIND
AND HIT
"**PLAY**."



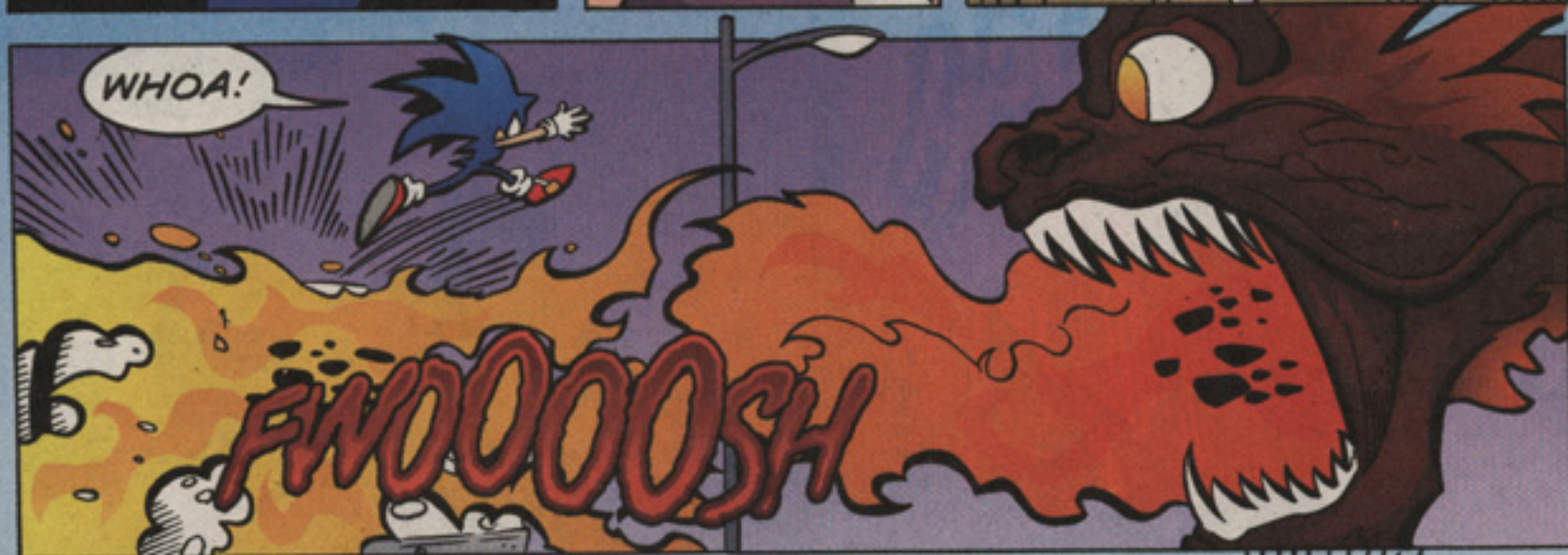
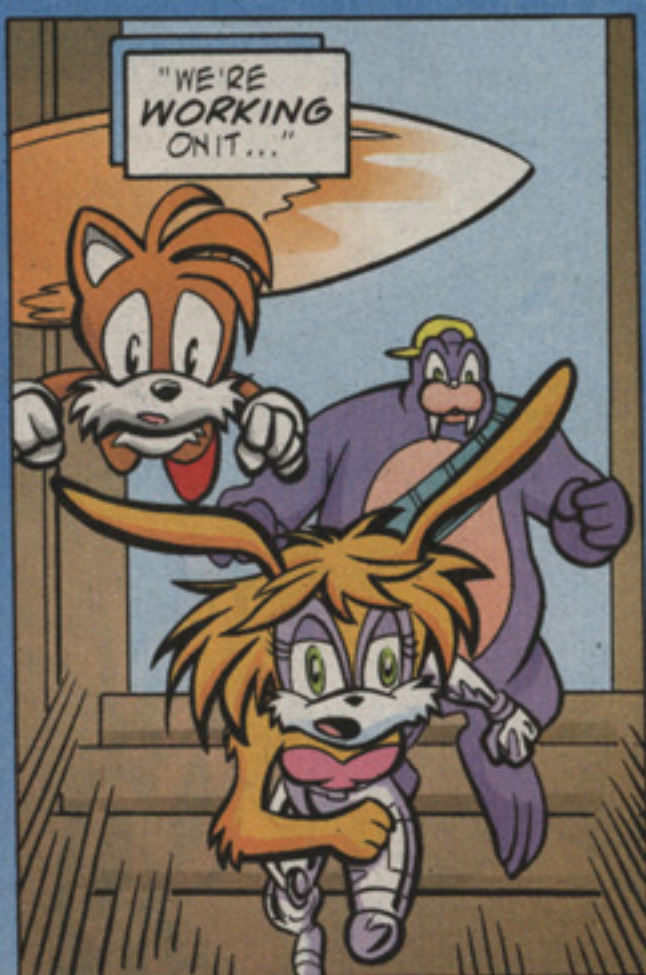




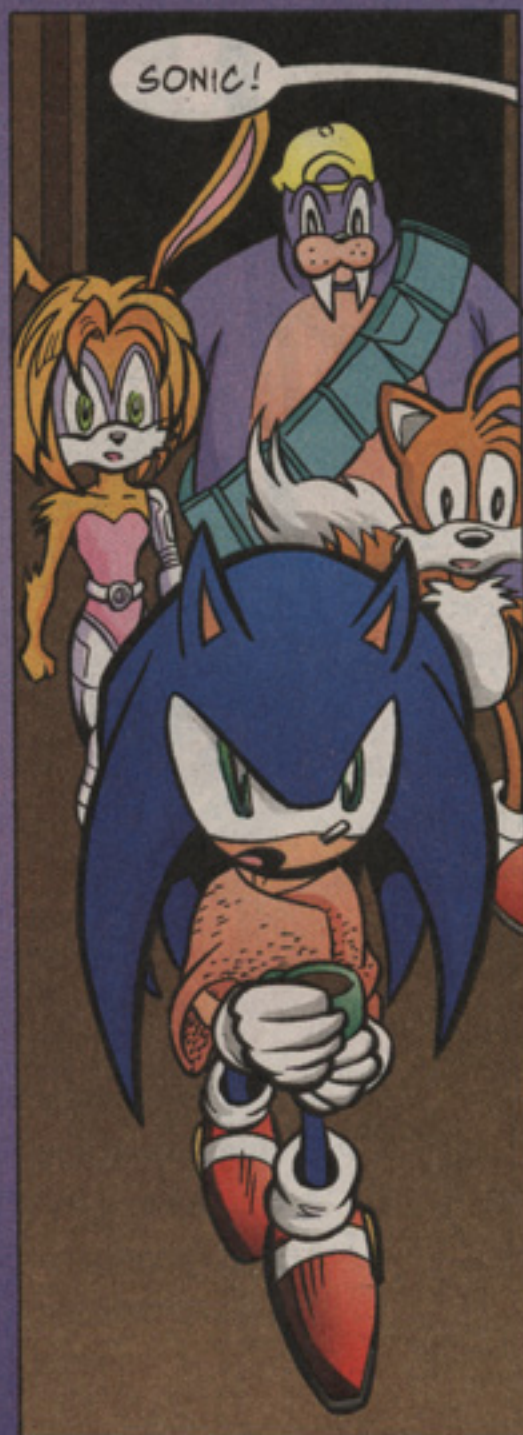


"HE'S ALREADY
THERE!"

CHILL OUT,
"SCALE-FACE!"







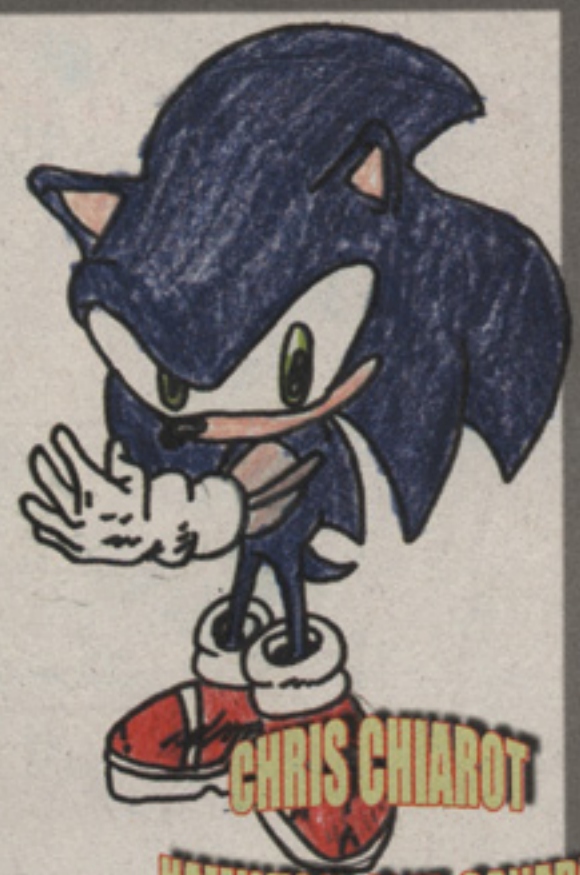
LEONARD MARTIN
HOUSTON, TEXAS



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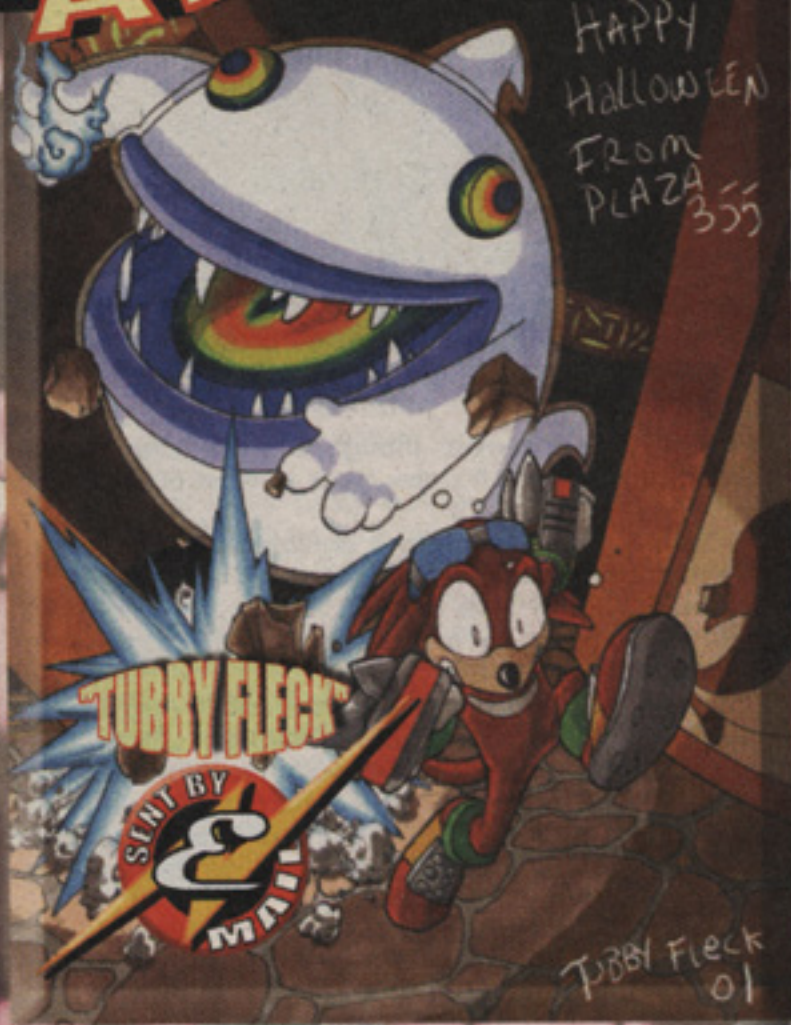
SONIC
FAN ART



CHRIS CHIAROT
HAMILTON, ONT, CANADA



JOHNNY LEDESMA
HOUSTON, TEXAS



HAPPY
HALLOWEEN
FROM
PLAZA 355

TUBBY FLECK
SENT BY
E
M

Tubby Fleck
01

SEGA DATA FILE: 7

BIG THE CAT'S HUT

MYSTIC RUINS

DEN OF THE
MYSTERIOUS CAT CREATURES

7

FIRST APPEARANCE: SONIC THE HEDGEHOG #80, March 2000

ESTABLISHED: Unknown, though some evidence has surfaced indicating it dates back at least 500 years, if not more

LOCATION: Deep beneath a continent located within the southern hemisphere of Mobius

SURFACE SIZE: 139.92 sq. metrons

HIGHEST POINT: 1.35 metrons from street surface to cavern ceiling

CLIMATE: The temperature is a constant 70 degrees, as the environment is artificially controlled utilizing the heat from magma deep beneath the planet's crust

POPULATION: Over 23,856,427 humanoids and an assortment of domesticated pets of various species

TALLEST BUILDING: Savage Skyscraper - 86 stories plus a mooring mast

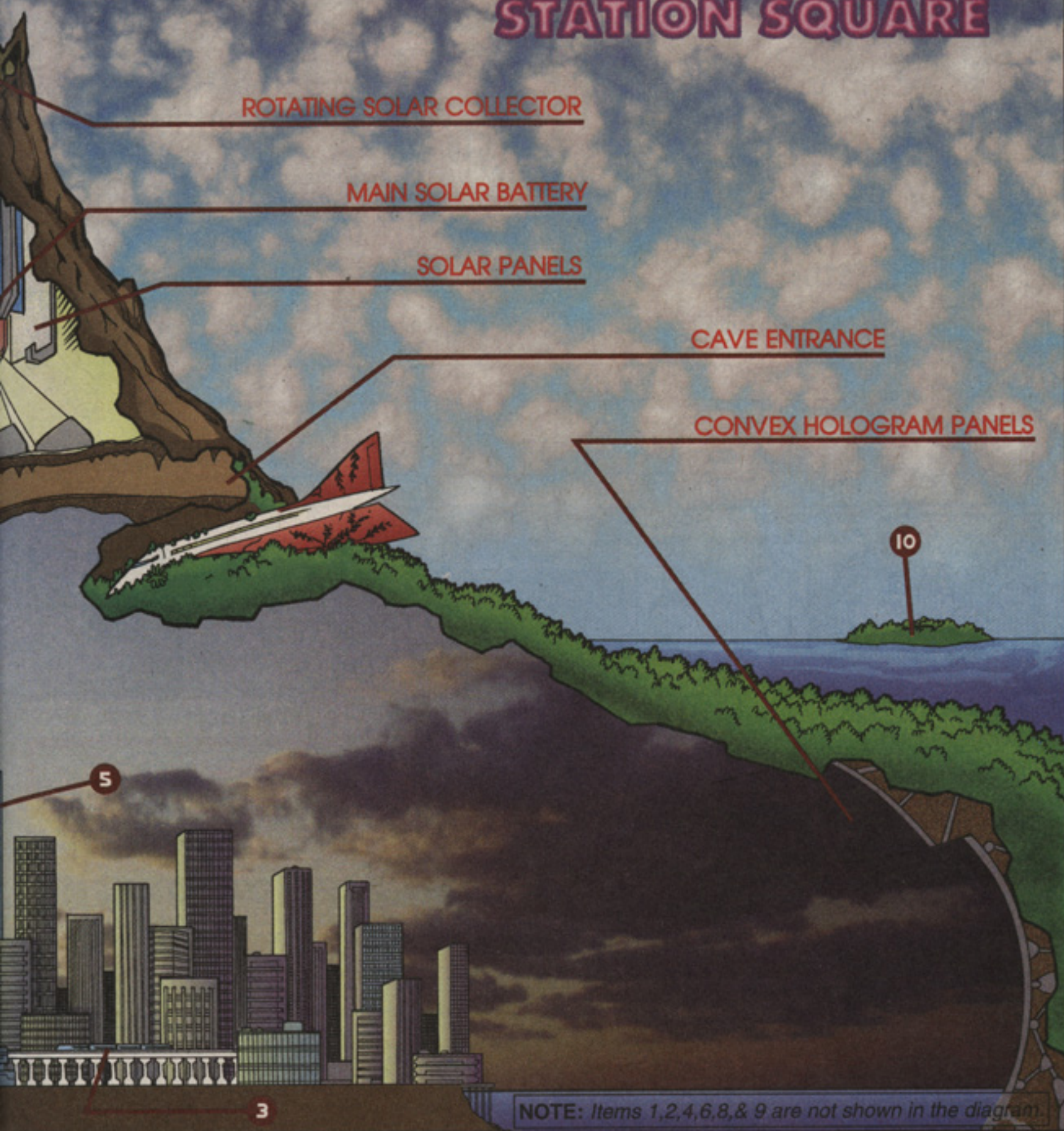
POINTS OF INTEREST: (1) Station Square Hotel, (2) Shopping Mall, (3) Elerail System, (4) Mayor's Office,

(5) Savage Skyscraper, (6) Police Station, (7) Power Plant, (8) President's Residence, (9) Bank of Station Square, (10) Gun Headquarters (on Prison Island)

HISTORY: Some time in pre-recorded history, there was a great catastrophe that engulfed the entire pre-Mobian world. Whether it was man-made or a natural occurrence is still unknown. Legend went on to record that the passengers of a large craft that soared through the skies crash-landed near a mountain located on one of the continents in the southern hemisphere.

Separated from everyone and everything they once knew, the passengers traveled through an immense cavern that led deep beneath the mountains, finally descending into a hidden land located under the continent. It's widely believed that the caverns shielded the survivors from the worst of the catastrophe. In this

STATION SQUARE



new sanctuary, they began rebuilding their society piece by piece, starting with the basics such as planting farms and building shelters. Because of their advanced knowledge, they were able to create heavy machines in order to build tools, vehicles and bigger buildings to house their growing population.

Within the span of a few generations, what had once been a hamlet of farms was now an immense metropolis, teeming with life under an artificially-created environment. This environment included the illusion of a sky, time of day, weather conditions and a world beyond, a world of which the inhabitants of this city wanted no part of.

With the completion of their largest building, the Savage Skyscraper, the city was rechristened Station Square, in part due to its elerail transit system that weaves its way through the city like a spider-

web, providing transportation for the citizens from any point throughout to another.

Among the many other features of this world, are the beaches and harbors that are surrounded by a body of water that encircles the entire city with water passages to the oceans above. Beyond the bridges that take one to the other side of the water are Dragon Island, Prison Island, the Emerald Coast, and the Mystic Ruins, a site the original settlers discovered while exploring. It was there that they found the six Chaos Emeralds used to provide power for the city's needs.

Since the unexpected discovery of their city by outsiders, the citizens of Station Square have debated whether or not to have any further dealings with the outside world. Only time will tell.

WELCOME TO
ECHIDNAOPOLIS.

IT'S BEEN AWHILE
SINCE ANYONE
HAS WALKED THESE
STREETS.

SINCE THE DARK
LEGION UNLEASHED
THE QUANTUM
BEAM UPON AN
UNSUSPECTING
POPULATION, ALL
HAS BEEN QUIET--

--UNTIL
NOW!

HE WAS BORN TO BE
NONE OTHER THAN THE
GUARDIAN OF THE
FLOATING ISLAND,
AND NOW

KNUCKLES
THE ECHIDNA

MUST CONFRONT THE
ONE BEING HE NEVER
IMAGINED!

THIS--
THIS **MUST** BE
THE PLACE!

THAT MEANS--
I MADE IT!!

THE **BIG**
QUESTION
NOW IS--

--HAVE I
ARRIVED IN
TIME?

REUNIFICATION

PART 1

ANOTHER CHAPTER IN THE ONGOING SAGA OF SEGA'S EVER-POPULAR ECHIDNA, BROUGHT TO YOU BY...
KEN PENDERS--SCRIPT, LAYOUTS & INKS DAWN BEST--PENCILLER
VICKIE WILLIAMS--LETTERER JOSH RAY--COLORIST JUSTIN GABRIE--EDITOR

UNTIL I FIND OUT *WHEN*
I'VE ARRIVED, I CAN ONLY
GUESS WHERE *THEY*
WILL BE!

WHILE
I CAN
HOPE FOR
THE
BEST...

--I MUST
ASSUME THE
WORST!

NO SIGN OF LIFE
ANYWHERE!

WHO'D
WE TICK
OFF TO
GET *THIS*
DETAIL?!

NOBODY
YOU'D WANT TO
CONFRONT OVER
THIS, RADAR!

NOW
THROTTLE
DOWN WHILE I
CONTACT HOME
BASE!

SCOUT
TEAM TWO
CALLING
COMMAND!
COME IN!
OVER!

THIS IS
COMMAND.
REPORT!

WE'VE COMPLETED
A SEARCH OF *SECTOR 31*
AND NO SIGN OF ANYTHING
OUT OF THE ORDINARY!

ARE YOU
CERTAIN?!



BREEEP!

VERY MUCH SO! WE CAN'T AFFORD TO TAKE ANY CHANCES!

OVER AND OUT!



COME!

GRANDFATHER DIMITRI! AND HOW ARE YOU TODAY?

IS YOUR BLOOD SUGAR COUNT AS IT SHOULD BE?



YOU'RE A DEAR, SWEET GIRL, LIEN-DA! WHEN THE TIME COMES, YOU'LL MAKE A WORTHY HEIR TO SUCCEED ME--

--BUT NOT TODAY!

NOW, SPEAK ON WHAT BRINGS YOU TO MY CHAMBERS?



I THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT KNUCKLES HAS LEFT THE BATTLE-CRUISER--

-- AND HAS BEEN ON THE FLOATING ISLAND FOR THE PAST SEVERAL HOURS!

WHHHAAAATT?!

COULD IT BE HIM THAT THE SENSORS WERE DETECTING EARLIER?

WHATEVER COULD HE BE UP TO?

"--LINLESS--"

"--HE'S ATTEMPTING THE ONE THING THAT COULD CHANGE THE EQUATION *DRAMATICALLY*--"

"--BY ATTEMPTING
TO *REVERSE* THE
EFFECTS OF THE
QUANTUM BEAM
HIMSELF!"

NOT EVEN
A *MOUSE*
CAN BE SEEN
SCAMPERING
ABOUT!

I MUST HAVE
ARRIVED WHEN *EVERY-
ONE* FROM THE ISLAND
WAS IN *ANOTHER
ZONE*!

STRANGE!
ALL OF A
SUDDEN, THE
WINDS ARE
BEGINNING TO
PICK UP!

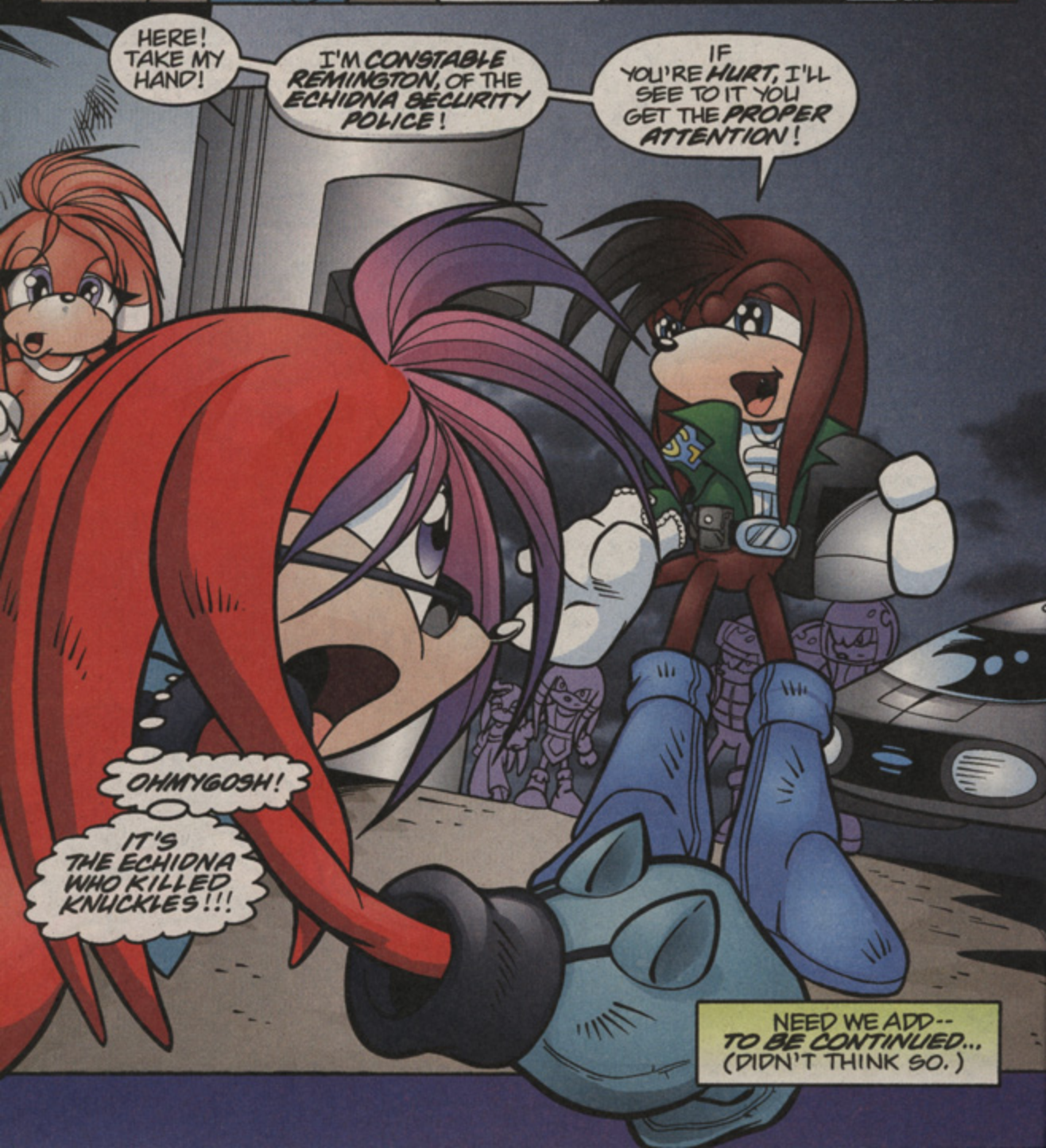
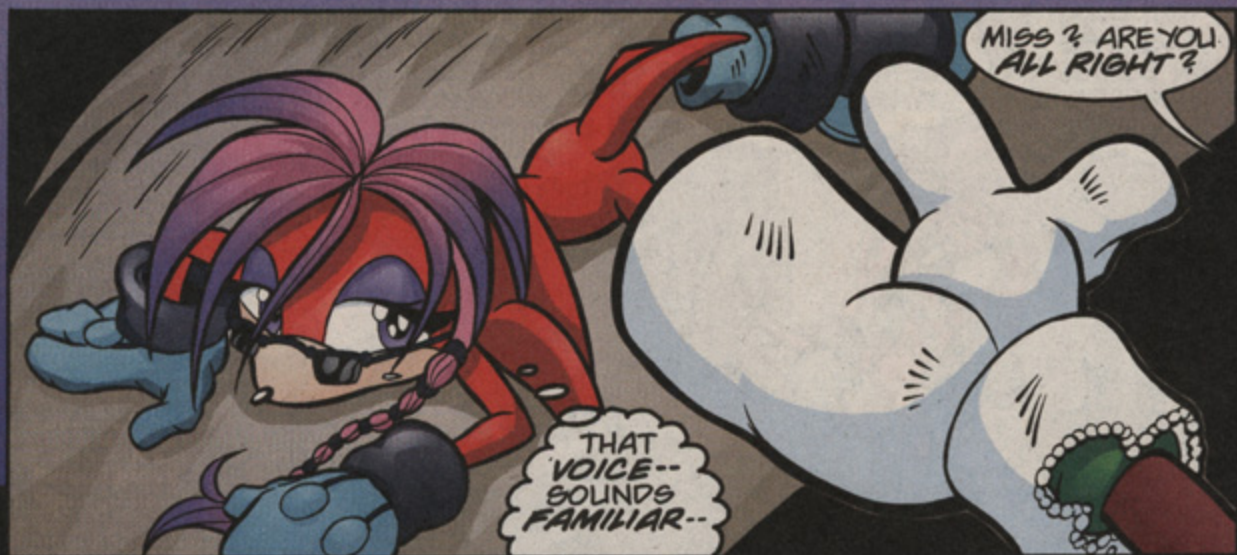
BUT
THERE'S
NOT A
CLOUD
IN THE
SKY!

SINCE WHEN WAS THERE *EVER* A
HURRICANE ON THE ISLAND ?!!

TAKING ALL
MY STRENGTH--
AND *MORE*--TO
KEEP FROM--

WOOF!

WHAAT?



HERE!
TAKE MY
HAND!

I'M CONSTABLE
REMINGTON, OF THE
ECHIDNA SECURITY
POLICE!

IF
YOU'RE HURT, I'LL
SEE TO IT YOU
GET THE PROPER
ATTENTION!

OHMYGOSH!

IT'S
THE ECHIDNA
WHO KILLED
KNUCKLES!!!

NEED WE ADD--
TO BE CONTINUED...
(DIDN'T THINK SO.)

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HEDGEHOG

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Off Panel



THIS JUST IN!

NEXT ISSUE: It looks like Karl and Ron have done it again. Done what? You'll have to read "Crouching Hedgehog, Hidden Dragon, Part 2," wherein the conclusion will be revealed. This one will rock you. As for Knuckles, things take a different turn as Dimitri personally goes before the High Council again to plead his case. Will he be more successful this time? Only Ken and Dawn know for sure. Put this one on your must-buy list.

And now it's time for the readers to make themselves heard, and boy, did they ever regarding SONIC #103. While the majority of you guys wrote expressing how much you liked it, a number of the younger readers were more than a tad curious about the source material for the story. Fortunately, a British fan came to our aid:

Dear Sonic-Grams,

Well, by now most Sonic fans have probably picked up StH #103, read it, and enjoyed some decent art in the main story for a change. If you're like me, you flipped out when you heard about this issue a few months ago - becoming a fan of the "Guardians of the Galaxy" 2 years ago after obtaining a copy of issue #24 in a grab-bag, this was another comic cross-over between two of my favourite (albeit completely unrelated) properties; first came the Image crossover (which was pretty good) also drawn by Jim Valentino, then the Sailor Moon one (which was okay). So, when StH 103 arrived last week, I dove in with great expectations, and was not disappointed - I was even surprised (more on that later).

However, if you're "not" like me and have never been into GOTG (or perhaps not even hearing about it before this issue was announced), chances are you might be a little lost when reading this particular Sonic story; which FF member is paying homage to/satirising which Guardian? Or, "what" are they supposed to be? "And who the heck were the Guardians, anyway?" Someone's gotta be wondering about that, especially if they had never heard of GOTG before. Well, for those of you who are in the latter camp, I'm going to help you out. I'll present a listing of who's supposed to be who, and list various tidbits of information about each character. Before we get into characters, it is worth noting is that both this Sonic-Alternaverse and the GOTG continuity feature origins so similar, it's not necessary to type all of the differences out - what you read in this Sonic story is a SatAM/Archie-fied version of the events which took place a thousand years before GOTG's chain of events. What happened that millennia ago in the GOTG timeline was revealed to Yondu and Vance (and readers) in a pseudo-holographic recording in GOTG #1. And now, the key players of both universes:

Sonic: Major Vance Astro - "First Earthman to the stars, last survivor of the 20th Century! His body forever sheathed in the silver and black suit that preserves his life, he is the master of the mutant power of

Psychokinesis!" [GOTG #1]. More or less the "Leader" of the Guardians from the start, Vance would later take off

his suit in GOTG #20 (check it out using the links above) and be revealed as the heir of Captain America - right down to the 'American' costume and indestructible shield. I'm willing to bet that Sonic takes on a similar form in StH #104...or maybe Jim and Mike will have Knuckles fill that role... Tailon (Tails): Talon - Introduced in #17, but wasn't "revealed" (or "seen outside of a shadowed silhouette [sic?]") until #19. Talon is a cat-man (appears to be in his mid-to-late teens, human-wise), born on the moon, and a would-be magician; his mentor gave up on teaching him when it became obvious that Talon was more interested in performing 'tricks' than actually learning about mystic stuff. He's quite an outgoing, 'everybody's pal' sort of character, with a healthy sense of humour and an affinity for taking the bright side of things - he's quite a jokester. He's

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Thanks for understanding!



kind of got the personality of a party-animal teenager or surfer dude (note the 'kind of'). He once said of himself, "Hey, I may be a flake, but I'm a loveable one!" [GOTG #24]. I would say he's got a personality more akin to Sonic (sans the sarcasm and vanity) than Tails, but since Sonic was taking the lead role (literally and figuratively), Tails was a far better choice to fill Talon's shoes than, say, Geoff St. John or Rotor - or even Knuckles. On the other hand, considering that Talon has the kind of personality that, unfortunately, Tailon doesn't seem to exhibit (despite being "around" the same age range), I guess it's kind of a moot point...

Captain Rotor-27 (Rotor): Captain Charlie-27 - "Fifth-Generation Militia-Man and last survivor of Earth's Jupiter Colony" [GOTG #1]. Charlie-27 is the team's heavy-weapons guy; when the Guardians went into battle against a revamped-for-the-30th-century Marvel villain, Chuck would usually run in brandishing a home-made BFG [as for what 'BFG' stands for: if you

have to ask, you'll never know :)]. Possessing a personality that is equal parts 'tough guy' and 'nice guy', Rotor fits into Charlie-27's role like a glove.

Saleta (Sally): Aleta - though her physical form was shared with Starhawk (see below), Aleta still managed to hold her own in the team, and was Vince's love interest to boot. That is, right up until Starhawk secretly took on a 'God' form (I think) and 'swallowed' her very being, trapping Aleta within his realm, where she stayed in a torturous state of limbo until...ah, skip it! I'm missing a few of the early issues anyway, so there's probably a bunch of details I'm gonna unintentionally fail to mention. Needless to say, she escaped, Starhawk reverted (again, I think), and so on. It's worth mentioning that Saleta and Sonic's costumes are the most similar in detail and design to their 'original' counterparts. So further kudos to Jim Valentino, everyone!

Bunni (Bunnie): Nikki - "Last child of Earth's mercury colony; the agility of her limbs is exceeded only by the unerring skill of her marksmanship - and the sting of her sarcasm!" [GOTG #1]. Nikki, as the above description implies, can best be described as a fire-girl, with flames for 'hair'. Mike Gallagher does a joke on this aspect of the original design when he writes that those from Bunni's planet had hair that only resembled fire due to static electricity - somewhat clever! I don't particularly mind that Gallagher removed the sarcasm aspect of Nikki's character for translation to "Bunni" - this was a better move than removing Talon's personality from Tails.

Twan-Du (Antoine): Yondu - "Last son of Earth's only extra-stellar colony, Centauri IV; Primitive Mystic and Weapons Master" [GOTG #1]. Yondu, being the supposed last of his alien species, carried on his civilisation's traditions - among them wearing his 'fin' with pride. Like Bunni, Mike makes a joke out of this, stating that Twan-Du's people comb their toupees to look like fins. It might be two hair jokes in one issue, but it works. Also, Yondu lost his hand in battle, and replaced it with a multi-purpose wrist-thing (picture a pirates hook without the hook, and you'll get the idea), something that doesn't apply to Twan-Du - guess someone figured this Alterna-verse was 'dark' enough already :|. However, Yondu did use a bow and arrow a few times in the Guardians' battles; here, Twan uses an arrow with a boxing glove on it, which could not only be considered another in-joke, but could also be a reference to Green Arrow, a DC comics character who uses a bow and 'trick' arrows (including a boxing-glove arrow).

Hawkhawk: Starhawk "Enigmatic mutant from the Planet Arcturus...shares his physical being with the woman, Aleta" [GOTG #1]. Starhawk was one of those

characters in every team book who, despite being an original member, left the series at one point, only to return later, for better or worse. The stuff listed in Saleta's section about him is more or less all I know about him right now, though I'll go out on a limb and assume that not many here will be too interested in the character beyond his connection to Sonic.

And Silver Snively, of course, is the Silver Surfer (I suppose the words "Bad Boy" on the bottom of his board is a play on the surfer/boarder aspect of the character), heralding the coming of Galactus (or Robolactus), his creator, and the Eater of Worlds (literally). Originally appearing in a Golden-Age issue of the Fantastic Four, the Silver Surfer and Galactus spelled doom for planets across the Marvel universe - right up until the Surfer turned against his master and became a hero. As I said in an earlier post to Powerzone, this 'Freedom Fighters of the Galaxy' arc is "very" similar to the events of GOTG 24-25, where the Surfer seeks out the aid of the Guardians to stop Galactus from attempting to consume Earth (again).

"whew" So, there you have it - a semi-guide to the Guardians of the Galaxy, for use with Sonic #103. And yet my fingers aren't tired.

Mike-Online

Mine would be exhausted at this point, Mike, and I do this for a living, but I'm sure many of our readers are very much appreciative for the info. Consider yourself an honorary Freedom Fighter for going above and beyond the call of duty.

Dear Sonic-grams:

I like Sonic the Hedgehog issue #103! I liked the backup story with the return of the Downunda Freedom Fighters! How about a backup story with the return of the Wolf Pack where Lupe who was ROBOTICISED is suddenly bought back to life first as a ghost and then for real? Would that make a great story idea? **Darryl Heine**

Maybe someday, but would you settle for a Chaotix story as well? That one we have in the works for an upcoming appearance when you least expect.

That's it for this issue.

More next time.

See you in 4 weeks.

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